



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **Growers to vote on future of Asparagus Commission**

OLYMPIA – Ballots are being prepared for asparagus growers to vote whether to terminate or maintain the Washington Asparagus Commission. Bill Brookreson, acting director of the state Department of Agriculture, this week signed the final decision to put the question to a referendum.

A petition to terminate the commission was submitted by a group of growers. Public hearings on the proposal were held in December with both supporters and opponents of the commission calling for a referendum vote on the issue.

Ballots are expected to be mailed in mid-April to some 300 asparagus growers. They will have between two and three weeks to respond with a decision on termination expected by May 15.

To terminate the commission, formed in 1991, 51 percent of the growers representing at least 51 percent of asparagus production must vote to terminate. Growers last year produced 34,200 tons of asparagus on about 19,000 acres.

Copies of Brookreson's decision are being sent to growers now. If approved, the termination would become effective Dec. 31.

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**Note to editors:** Copies of the Asparagus Commission's marketing order (WAC 16-557) are available on the department's Web site at <http://www.wa.gov/agr/asparagus>.